
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2019

by G Jenkinson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L2440/D/19/3224735

142 Saffron Road, Wigston LE18 4UP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Azam against the decision of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston Council.
 - The application Ref 18/00543/FUL, dated 6 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two-storey side and rear extensions plus the porch and canopy access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above has been taken from the decision notice, as it more comprehensively captures the scope of the appeal development than the description included in the application form¹. I have, however, omitted the word 'retention' as this is not an act of development for the purposes of the Planning Acts. The Council made its decision on this basis and so have I.
3. The application that led to this appeal was retrospective in nature insofar as it relates to a development that has already been built. At my site visit I saw that all of the proposals had been developed albeit they were not all built in accordance with the submitted drawings. I have assessed the appeal on this basis, and have had due regard to the submitted plans and details.
4. During the course of the appeal the Oadby and Wigston New Local Plan has been adopted. All parties were therefore asked to comment in relation to this matter and the effects of any policy changes upon the appeal proposal and I have considered the responses in determining the appeal.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the appeal development upon the character and appearance of the area.

¹ Which is retrospective planning permission for front porch

Reasons

The character and appearance of the area.

6. The appeal site comprises one half of a pair of two storey semi-detached dwellings. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, made up of semi-detached and detached properties set back from the road with deep front curtilages and driveways.
7. The appeal relates to a two-storey side extension with gable-ended roof, rear extension at ground and first floor and a porch with a canopy across the entire frontage. The existing house was a traditional 3-bed semi with an attached single storey garage, which at some time had been extended to the rear to provide a kitchen. Now the single storey side extension has been replaced with a new 2 storey development, creating a large double fronted house with a gable ended roof.
8. The neighbouring semi detached properties have hipped roofs. The proposal introduces a gable-ended roof to the street scene with a continuation of the existing ridgeline. The introduction of the hip to gable roof style is the element of the scheme that has the greatest impact and which results in an overbearing and incongruous feature that erodes the uniformity within this section of Saffron Road. I accept that asymmetry does not necessarily equate to poor design, however, the bulk of the development appears out of keeping with the character and appearance of the area.
9. The side extension has extended the ridge and roof plane of the existing property and replaced the hipped roof with a gable end. Although the front elevation of the extension is stepped back from that of the main house, the eaves line of the roof is not stepped back. This imparts a dominant and not a subservient impression to the appeal building's roof- and due to its prominence and bulk imparts a lopsided asymmetry to its host pair of semi-detached dwellings. These aspects of the scheme mean that the appeal dwelling looks incongruous within the streetscene, where hip roofed semi-detached dwellings impart a strong sense of rhythm and harmony to the streetscene. The relative narrowness of the side extension does not successfully soften these harmful effects.
10. I saw in the environs of the site that large-scale alterations to the front elevations of dwellings were rare. Where porches were developed these were on the whole of a modest scale, of simple design, and in a restrained materials palette. Within this context the large porch, canopy and pillars look wholly out of keeping, an effect that would be exacerbated by the use of marble elements rendering the structure more eye-catching within the streetscene. Consequently, this aspect of the appeal development intensifies its overall incongruity.
11. I note that the appellant states that the Council previously considered a gable end to be acceptable if the proposal involved a 'stepped ridge' and I note the reference to a previous permission related to the property in the appellant's statement and Officer Report.
12. To my mind the extension as built is unlike the previous permission relating to the property, which although I have no illustrative material before me is

described as involving a stepped down roof ridge, and that the roof plane would not be continued. I consider, on the basis of the limited material I have been supplied with, that such design elements could result in a less dominant structure. That previous permission does not therefore weigh in favour of the appeal development in these terms.

13. I therefore conclude that for the reasons set out above the appeal development causes considerable harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal therefore fails to comply with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies 14 and 15 of the Oadby and Wigston Core Strategy (2010), Landscape Proposal 1 and Housing Proposal 17 of the Oadby and Wigston Local Plan (1999) and the Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document (2005) which amongst other things seek to ensure that new development is in keeping with the prevailing character of the area. The proposals also fail to comply with the relevant policies in the New Local Plan.

Other Matters

14. I note the appellants comments in relation to the vegetative screening that exists between the appeal property and those adjacent which they consider mitigates the proposal's impact, and that a gap would be retained between the appeal property and the neighbouring dwelling so avoiding a terracing effect; however, the scale bulk, massing and design of the development is such that these features cannot outweigh the resultant harm.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that considerable harm would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

Gemma Jenkinson

INSPECTOR